

Working with Adults at Risk

This document gives guidance for working with adults and particularly adults at risk and outlines best practice for Pastoral visiting. This document also makes reference to relevant sections of other policies, with which you should also familiarise yourself.

For the purposes of this document, 'staff' or 'worker' refers to any adult leader working with adults or adults at risk – regardless of whether they are an employee or a volunteer. 'Line manager' refers to the person to whom you report – for volunteers this may be a Deacon, the Church Worker or a Church Group Co-ordinator.

1 Best Practice when working with adults at risk

1.1 Language

Language and tone of voice should be appropriate to the adult's capability and any additional needs. Workers should:

- be aware of their body language and the effect they are having on the adult.
- every effort will be taken to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary, enabling the greatest level of inclusivity and accessibility
- be mindful of the language used within worship and the language used to describe people (such as derogatory words focusing on aspects of someone's disability, race, or sexuality rather than the person themselves).

If people want to talk about personal issues, workers should avoid asking searching questions and not give advice. Listen more than you talk! In a group situation, workers should try to gently stop one person dominating the conversation, particularly about potentially sensitive topics.

1.2 Worship

In all worship services, we will consider the varied requirements of our congregation and try to be as inclusive as possible, by:

- Providing a copy of large print type for all printed materials if requested/required
- Speakers always facing the congregation and not covering their mouths when talking, enabling those who rely on lip-reading
- Describing what is being presented on a screen for those who cannot see it clearly
- Using inclusive language
- Using a variety of liturgy and resources to cater for different levels of understanding
- Using a microphone during times of open prayer so that all can hear
- Considering holding a service which specifically caters for certain groups of adults at risk, such as those with learning disabilities, the deaf or the visually impaired.

1.3 Financial Integrity

Arrangements are in place for dealing with money, financial transactions, and gifts, as outlined below. Workers should:

- not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond any salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- not be influenced by offers of money.
- ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart to avoid any conflict of interest.
- report any gifts received to the Deacons who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Any cash received by the church should be handled by two unrelated church workers.

In addition:

- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the Deacons. Workers should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.
- Expert legal advice should be sought on matters such as Power of Attorney and Appointeeship to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the adult at risk.

1.4 Photographs

Workers should make sure that they have the person's permission to take a picture, and that the subject is happy with the intended use of the pictures. When taking group pictures, workers should remember to get verbal permission from everyone who will be photographed.

2 Confidentiality

With adults, confidentiality means that someone's personal business is not discussed with others, except with their permission. This is not always possible when considering passing relevant information about abuse or concerns to the church Designated Person for Safeguarding, (DPS) the statutory authorities or the local association. However, it is possible to keep the information confidential to the relevant parties. This means not telling or hinting to others what someone has disclosed, not even for prayer ministry.

What if an adult doesn't want help?

The mental capacity of the adult is vital in deciding what should be done. All actions should be based on the assumption that the individual has the capacity and the right to make their own choices in relation to their personal safety and well-being. This includes upholding their right to follow a course of action which others may deem unwise or eccentric, including staying in a situation of abuse.

If the adult doesn't want help it may still be necessary to inform the police or Adult Social Care Services, who can put a safeguarding plan in place so that, as far as possible, the adult continues to be protected. This is particularly important:

- When the person lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice
- When there is a risk of harm to others
- In order to prevent a crime

If at all unsure of whether or not to pass on information about abuse without permission, contact the church Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) for advice.

It is also important that the adult is given / knows where to get appropriate help and support if they should change their mind.

3 Pastoral Ministry

3.1 Pastoral Visits / Meetings

All those involved in pastoral ministry should work in a way that follows clearly defined procedures agreed by the church. These procedures should set out the boundaries for pastoral care so that all parties can understand their position and that they protect those carrying out the pastoral ministry as well as those receiving it.

- An appointment should be made in advance for all visits and meetings.
- A record should be made of all visits and meetings noting date, time, location, subject and any actions to be taken.

3.2 Pastoral Relationships

- Workers should be aware of the power imbalance within pastoral relationships and the potential for abuse of trust.
- Behaviour that suggests favouritism or gives the impression of a special relationship, should be avoided.
- Workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency within a pastoral relationship.
- Workers should never take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with someone with whom they have a pastoral relationship.
- All people receiving pastoral ministry should be treated with respect and should be encouraged to make their own decisions about any actions or outcomes.
- Workers should not pastorally minister to anyone whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- Workers should recognise the limits of their own abilities and competencies, and they should not hesitate to get further help when working with situations outside of their expertise and role.

3.3 Record keeping

All pastoral visits or meetings must be arranged by prior appointment; there will be no 'dropping in'.

Workers should record pastoral visits or meetings, noting the date, time, location, subject and any actions which are to be taken, either using visiting sheets provided or using 'Teamup'. The sheets will then be stored/passed on to a nominated person (*currently our pastor Andrew Henton Pusey*). The record of these meetings should stick to facts and try to avoid opinion. Any records of safeguarding allegations, concerns or disclosures should be passed on to the DPS who will store them in a safe and secure manner for at least 75 years.

3.4 Finances

Arrangements are in place for dealing with money, financial transactions, and gifts, as outlined in section 1.3 above and will be discussed at induction for pastoral visitors

Those who work pastorally with adults at risk may also become involved in some other aspects of personal finance - collecting pensions or benefits, shopping, or banking, etc. If handling money for someone else, always obtain receipts or other evidence of what has been done.